

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

020614Z May 06

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BANGKOK 002548

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/05/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KUNR](#) [TH](#) [UNHRC](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - THAILAND SEEKS U.S. SUPPORT

REF: A. A. STATE 66050

[B](#). B. BANGKOK.2420

[C](#). C. STATE 60967

Classified By: Political Counselor Susan M. Sutton by reasons 1.4 (b) (d)

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 5.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY. On April 28, POLOFF delivered demarche (reftel A) to the Thai MFA regarding Iran's candidacy for the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). The MFA confirmed Thailand's own candidacy within the Asia Group for a UNHRC seat presented their "Voluntary Commitments." Thailand is concerned over their chances of being elected because most countries have already committed to an "exchange of votes" and their own lack of "natural constituencies." Thailand is seeking active U.S. support for their candidacy. Regarding Iran's candidacy, Thailand feels uncomfortable criticizing their competitors for concerns that may reflect negatively on its own candidacy. FM Kantathi Suphamongkhon is requesting a call with the Secretary to discuss Thai candidacy for the UNHRC. End Summary.

MFA CONFIRMS THAILAND'S CANDIDACY TO THE UNHRC

[1](#)3. (SBU) POLOFF met with Ms. Phantipha Iamsudha, Counselor of the Social Division of the Department of International Organization at the MFA regarding the upcoming UNHRC elections. Phantipha confirmed that Thailand has decided to run for a seat (reftel B), and presented Thailand's "Voluntary Commitments" (see text below). Thailand believes that they hold a good human rights record (including being State Party of five of the seven core international human rights instruments) relative to other nations in the Asia Group, and that their "unique geo-strategic" position give them credibility to "both sides - the U.S. and the developing countries." Phantipha explained that Thailand is interested in a seat to the UNHRC because membership would deepen their own domestic commitments to respecting human rights.

[1](#)4. (C) Phantipha stated that despite wide support expressed by many countries and NGOs, Thailand was concerned that most nations had already committed an "exchange of votes." Furthermore, Thailand lacks the advantage of "natural constituencies" that candidate countries in OIC, the Commonwealth or "Francophones" enjoy. Therefore, Thailand hopes that the U.S. can actively lobby and encourage other nations to support Thailand's candidacy to the UNHRC.

ACTION REQUEST: CALL WITH THE SECRETARY

[1](#)5. (SBU) The MFA has requested a call between FM Kantathi Suphamongkhon and Secretary Rice to discuss Thailand's candidacy. Kantathi would like to personally advise the Secretary that Thailand seeks a seat on the new UNHRC and

SIPDIS

wishes U.S. support. MFA hopes the call can be arranged early next week.

RELUCTANCE TO TAKE POSITION ON IRAN

[1](#)6. (C) When POLOFF presented reftel A request, Phantipha explained since Iran is also a candidate in the Asia Group for a seat on the HRC, Thailand feels "uncomfortable to criticize Iran" in light of their own candidacy. They believe that their criticisms would be viewed as self-serving, and suggested that perhaps the U.S. would have more credibility to make a case against Iran. Phantipha explained that Thailand has yet to commit to any candidate but is looking at the overall picture of candidate nations from each region before making their final decision. However, Thailand holds that selection criterion should reflect the candidate country's own human

rights conditions domestically, as well as the country's legal commitment and implementation of human rights instruments.

(SBU) BEGIN TEXT:

Thailand's Voluntary Commitments

Thailand is firmly committed to the respect for human dignity, justice, compassion, non-discrimination and a sense of mutual obligations to fellow human beings, which together constitute core human rights principles. On December 10, 1948, Thailand joined the other 47 Member States of the United Nations in voting to adopt the draft Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Since then, Thailand has gradually accepted international legal obligations concerning human rights. Thailand is, at present, a State Party to 5 out of the 7 core international human rights instruments. They are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Thailand is also a State Party to the Optional Protocol to CEDAW, thereby accepting individual complaints regarding alleged violations of the CEDAW. Most recently, in January and February 2006, Thailand became a State Party to the 2 Optional Protocols to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and on the involvement of children in armed conflict, respectively.

Furthermore, Thailand is a State Party to 5 out of the 8 core conventions under the International Labour Organization pertaining to forced labour and its abolition (Conventions no. 29 and 105), equal remuneration between men and women for work of equal value (Convention no. 100), minimum age for employment (Convention no. 138), and the prohibition and elimination of worst forms of child labour (Convention no. 182). Thailand is also a State Party to the four Geneva Conventions on international humanitarian law of 1949.

Thailand's aforementioned legal obligations are given effect to under Thai law. In particular, Thailand's present Constitution of 1997 guarantees civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and fundamental freedoms for all, in line with its international legal obligations. Various mechanisms have also been set up under the present Constitution to advance the cause of human rights within the country. They are the National Human Rights Commission, the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Administrative Court and the Constitutional Court.

Moreover, Thailand attaches great importance to the preparation and presentation of its reports to the relevant treaty bodies. In July 2005, Thailand submitted its ICCPR initial report to the Human Rights Committee, and in January 2006, submitted its periodic reports to the CEDAW and CRC Committees. Due regard is given to the observations and recommendations made by these treaty bodies.

At the regional level, Thailand fully supports initiatives to enhance dialogue and cooperation among countries within the region, such as the annual Canada-China-Norway Symposium on Human Rights. Initiatives to discuss the possibility of establishing human rights mechanisms at the regional and sub-regional level is also very much encouraged by Thailand.

Over the years, Thailand has played host to several regional and sub-regional meetings and workshops on human rights, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNCHR). For example, in 2001, Thailand hosted the Ninth Asia-Pacific Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. In 2004, Thailand hosted the Inter-Sessional Workshop on National Human Rights Plan of Action and Human Rights Education in the Asia-Pacific Region and the Sub-Regional Workshop on the Implementation of the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Thailand recognizes a strong linkage between human rights and human security. Thailand is a Member of the Human Security Network (HSN) which is a group of 14 like-minded countries from all parts of the world working together to guarantee freedom from fear, freedom from want and human dignity for all. Activities in the area of human rights under HSN are such as the promotion of human rights education, the protection of and assistance to children affected by armed conflicts and the promotion of the

implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Thailand sees the HRC as a turning point in the promotion and protection of human rights and looks forward to contributing to the work of the HRC, especially in its formative first session.

in light of its candidature of election to the Human Rights Council and in accordance with paragraph 8 of resolution 60/251, Thailand pledges voluntary commitments as follows:

Promotion and protection of human rights at the international level

Thailand will fully cooperate with the Human Rights Council in all of its endeavours to further the cause of human rights worldwide through constructive dialogue and cooperation.

Thailand will continue to support efforts to mainstream human rights within the United Nations system.

Thailand reaffirms its belief that all human rights are indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and will continue to promote and protect all human rights, be they civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development on an equal footing.

Thailand will continue to support the work of various United Nations agencies and funds dealing with human rights matters such as the OHCHR, UNHCR, UNIFEM, INSTRAW and UNICEF, through, inter alia, financial contribution on a regular basis.

Thailand will continue to support the work of National Human Rights Institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, through, inter alia, regular financial contribution to relevant agencies such as the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions.

Promotion and protection of human rights at the national level

Thailand will continue to mainstream human rights in all of its work at the national level.

Thailand will continue to promote human rights education at all level as a tool to prevent human rights violations.

Thailand will cooperate with the United Nations treaty monitoring bodies by implementing, to the best of its capacity, their concluding observations and recommendations in regard to Thailand.

Thailand is considering becoming party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Thailand is in the process of taking steps under its constitution so as to become party to the United Nations Conventions on Transitional Organized Crimes, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, and the Protocol Against Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.

Thailand is taking steps to become party to the 1977 Additional Protocol I to the four Geneva Conventions on international humanitarian law of 1949.

As a country that has played an active role in the United Nations Reform process, especially the reform of the United Nations human rights mechanisms, it is Thailand's aspiration to have an opportunity to participate in the first session of the Human Rights Council as one of its members. Thailand has a high expectation of the work of the newly established Human Rights Council and will do its utmost to ensure that the Council becomes a main forum for constructive dialogue and cooperation on issues concerning human rights.

END TEXT.

BOYCE
BOYCE